

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EA-09

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R 150531Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3229

AMEMBASSY LISBON

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

S E C R E T JAKARTA 3420

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINT MILI ID PO

SUBJECT: PORTUGUESE PRISONERS IN TIMOR

REFS: (A) STATE 57190, (B) LISBON 1609

1. IN RESPONSE TO REF. A I RAISED PORTUGUESE PRISONER ISSUE IN COURSE OF GENERAL CONVERSATION WITH GENERAL BENNI MURDANI MARCH 14. GENERAL MURDANI IS OFFICER PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE FOR TIMOR OPERATION AND HAS EAR OF PRESIDENT SUHARTO.

2. IN DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE UN ACTION ON TIMOR, I TOLD GENERAL MURDANI THAT AMONG ELEMENTS WE OF NECESSITY MUST CONSIDER IN OUR OWN ACTION IS ATTITUDE OF PORTUGAL. WE ATTACH MAJOR IMPORTANCE, AS WE BELIEVE OTHER INTERESTED COUNTRIES SHOULD, TO CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF NON-COMMUNIST, DEMOCRATIC REGIME IN PORTUGAL. WE ARE, THEREFORE, SENSITIVE TO PORTUGAL'S THINKING ON ANY ISSUE. IT IS OUR APPRAISAL THAT PORTUGUESE ATTENTION TO TIMOR ISSUE IS CURRENTLY LARGELY MOTIVATED BY CONCERN OVER 23

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PRISONERS. IF THIS PROBLEM COULD SOME HOW BE ELIMINATED,

PORUGUESE APPROACH TO FORTHCOMING UN DEBATE MIGHT BE MORE FLEXIBLE AND THIS IN TURN COULD HAVE SOME BEARING ON OUR OWN FREEDOM OF ACTION IT REMAINED U.S. DESIRE TO AVOID EMBARRASSING U.S.-INDONESIAN RELATIONS ON TIMOR ISSUE AND THIS IN MIND WE HOPE FOR THE ELIMINATION OF ISSUES WHICH COULD COMPLICATE PROBLEM.

3. GENERAL MURDANI SAID PRISONER ISSUE IS VERY MUCH IN INDONESIAN MINDS AND HE HAD ONLY DAY BEFORE DISCUSSED IT WITH GENERAL YOGA, CHIEF OF BAKIN. OFFICIAL INDONESIAN POSITION IT THAT PRISONERS ARE IN HANDS OF PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT EAST TIMOR. FACT IS THAT FOR PRISONERS OWN SAFETY THEY ARE BEING HELD IN HOSPITAL IN INDONESIAN TIMOR.

4. INDONESIAN FOREIGN DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN PRESSING GENERAL YOGA TO RECOMMEND TO PRESIDENT RELEASE OF PRISONERS ON BASIS STRENGTHENING INDONESIAN POSTURE BEFORE NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE. ACCORDING GENERAL MURDANI, YOGA'S RESPONSE HAS BEEN: "WHY SHOULD WE PAY ANY ATTENTION TO OPINIONS OF THIRD WORLD AND ARABS. THEY HAVENT DONE ANYTHING FOR US."

5. MURDANI SAID, HOWEVER, HE BELIEVED SITUATION I DESCRIBED AND POSSIBLE EFFECT ON DEBATE IN UN MIGHT BE MORE PERSUASIVE WITH GENERAL YOGA. HE WOULD SEE GENERAL YOGA AND DISCUSS IT.

6. MURDANI SAID THAT SITUATION MIGHT BE HELPED IF PORTUGAL COULD ADDRESS APPEAL DIRECTLY TO PGET. WHEN I ASKED HOW THIS MIGHT BE DONE, HE SAID EITHER THROUGH SANI IN NEW YORK OR THROUGH DUTCH WHO REPRESENT PORTUGAL'S INTERESTS IN JAKARTA.

7. I HAVE ALSO SENT WORD TO GENERAL YOGA THAT I WOULD LIKE TO REVIEW TIMOR SITUATION WITH HIM. POSSIBILITY EXISTS THAT I MAY ALSO BE ABLE TO RAISE QUESTION THERE.

8. COMMENT: I BELIEVE APPROACH HAS BEEN USEFUL. I WOULD ASSUME MINIMUM PRICE FOR RELEASE WILL BE SOME FORM OF PORTUGUESE RECOGNITION OF PGET. HOPEFULLY, THIS
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WILL BE PRICE PORTUGAL PREPARED TO PAY.

9. FOR LISBON: SUGGEST AMBASSADOR CARLUCCI INFORM PORTUGUESE MATTER HAS BEEN RAISED AND THAT, WHILE THERE IS STILL NOT UNIFIED OPINION ON MATTER WITHIN GOI, WE HAVE FEELING GOI WOULD BE RECEPTIVE TO PORTUGUESE APPEAL ADDRESSED IN SOME FORM TO PGET. WE WOULD PREFER THAT AT THIS POINT EMBASSY LISBON NOT DISCUSS WITH PORTUGUESE

SPECIFICS OF CONFLICTING VIEWS WITHIN GOI OR WHAT MURDANI
SAID RE LOCATION OF PRISONERS.
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